

COL. PAUL WENTWORTH HOUSE
Salmon Falls, N.H.

HABS NH-35

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PHOTOGRAPHS AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Hampshire

Historic American Buildings Survey
Eugene W. Clark, Deputy Officer
Durham, New Hampshire

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CONTINUED

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COL. PAUL WENTWORTH HOUSE

Salmon Falls, Strafford County, New Hampshire

<u>Owner</u>	Mrs. Frederick S. Blodgett 288 PRINCE ST. NEWTON, MASS
<u>Date of Erection</u>	1701
<u>Architect</u>	Unknown
<u>Builder</u>	Unknown. BUILT FOR COL. PAUL WENTWORTH
<u>Present Condition</u>	Originally one room deep lean-to added. Exterior finish and eills in very poor condition.
<u>Number of Stories</u>	Two and a half
<u>Materials of Construction</u>	Foundations stone. Superstructure wood. CLAPBOARDS Chimney brick laid in clay.
<u>Other Existing Records</u>	Old Time New England October, 1928 by Frank Chouteau Brown

The building has been moved to Dover, Massachusetts.

Additional Data

PAUL WENTWORTH HOUSE.

(The house has not been measured and consequently not studied.) In a preliminary visit I went over the house with Mr. Wendell and later with Mrs. Blodgett.

The original house was a central chimney type one room deep and two stories high. The lean-to was added later and it probably contained a new kitchen with a large fireplace and oven.

The East Room, First Floor, was undoubtedly the original kitchen, containing a cooking fireplace and oven which has since been changed to a large living fireplace without an oven. The jambs of the fireplace are laid with a wide splay and a method of bonding bricks at the corner which we associate with later work, while the splay and corner of the fireplace of the room above it seems contemporary with the first building. The floor boards are too narrow to be old and the extent of the original hearth is not marked by them. The dado with very wide stiles and rails, which are common in this section, runs behind the corner cupboard. This suggests that

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1890 to 1900

the cupboard was an afterthought. On either side of the door to the Kitchen, the dado cap miters and drops to the floor. This is a very interesting treatment that we have not met else, where, but one wonders where the original door was from this old kitchen to the well and out-buildings. It was generally near the corner of the room where the cupboard now stands. The shutters are hinged and lay back against the plaster wall. This room is very attractive in proportion and detail, except for the brick work of the fireplace which is quite crude.

The West Room, First Floor, is a bird of another feather. The ~~staid~~ out trim of the fireplace and the very flat mouldings through out the room reminds us of the refinement that preceded third period work. There is a very elaborate moulding below the cased chimney girt, the upper member of which breaks out, suggesting that there was some sort of over-mantle. The sliding shutters tend to confirm the suggestion that the trim of this room is late. Still later than the moulded trim we think are the wide boards that form the wall treatment. The room is very beautiful in tone, and the contrast between plain boards and the moulded trim of slightly different color and texture is pleasing in its self. However the interest in the room derived by the means employed, is rather modern than traditional of Colonial work. The boards are old and as we remember it the present owner found them in place covered with wallpaper.

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The Second Floor room to the East is another fine interior. It has cased corner posts, beams, no dado, wide floor boards, and an unusual fireplace, with an arched top off-set. We have found in this section two other arched openings but in neither of them was the arch, off-set, one was built about 1700 and the other 1785. The panelling and pilasters flanking the fireplace are nicely worked out and the wall is very pleasing. The proportion however is thin and suggests work of the revolutionary period.

The Second Floor rooms to the West are the most interesting in the house. The main room is at the back of the house, and in front is what appears to an anti-room and bed room for a body servant. The main room is panelled on four walls. On these walls the panelling meets the casing of the girts, and on the interior wall the plaster ceiling, without a compensating moulding. It is three panels high with the small panel at the waist line. The stiles are very wide and the proportion square and vigorous. It is a wonderful room, unique in this section in strength and pattern and possibly the earliest all-panelled room about here. I hope that future study will show that it is original with the house. There is however a discrepancy between size of the brick fireplace opening and the wood opening.

The remaining portion of the original house to be mentioned is the stair hall which extends from the first floor to the attic. From the second floor to the attic is a heavy closed string and a moulded hand rail of about the same pattern that we found in the 1705 house on Deer Street, Portsmouth, N. H. It is almost a tudor section. There are no balusters in this run and there may never have been any. In the Deer Street House there were pine balusters, 2" square. This portion of the stair we consider original, but the run from the first to the second floor is an open string type with graceful hand rail and decorative pilasters. We think that the stair, first to second floor was rebuilt at about the period of the Revolution at about which time we think that the moulded trim of the first floor West Room and the panelling of the second floor East Room was installed.

These old houses are documents of change in habits and taste of the whole people and in particular the history of the families that lived in them. A pure aesthetic may be shocked at the change in character in passing from the West bed room to the East bed room, or from the first run of stairs to the second run of stairs. To most of us the changes tell other stories. The desire for greater refinement in living and surroundings and the attendant loss in directness and vig-

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or. The tendency to cover structural members, and their final obliteration in the superficial treatment which represents them not at all, or falsely represents them in an effort for purely superficial charm, which reflects the thickening veneer of social graces over the sturdy character of the Pioneer.

It may tell the personal history of the family, its growth or personal idiosyncracies as expressed in this house with the Master bed room at the back of the house and a body servant at hand. Whatever tales we may now draw from it, these old houses if undisturbed are genuine historical documents which may serve us and succeeding generations if they can be preserved.

Eugene O'Shea